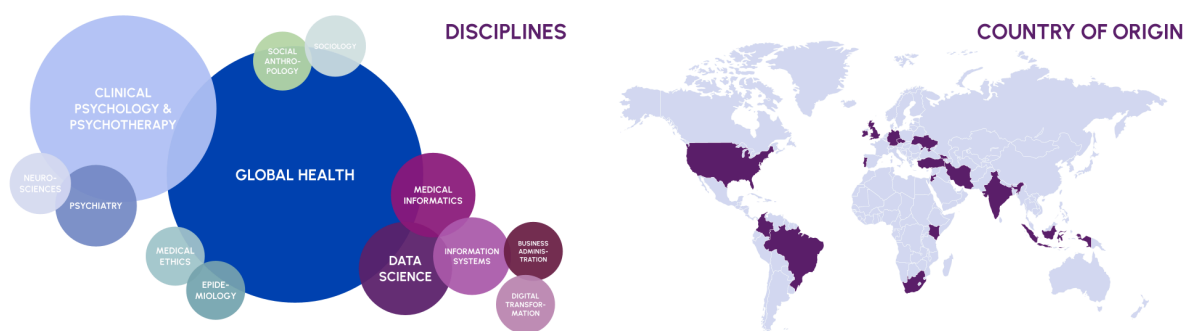# Digital Technologies for Global Mental Health
## Overcoming Disciplinary Borders

On 18th and 19th April 2024, researchers gathered at the European University Viadrina for a workshop dedicated to fostering collaboration in the field of global digital mental health. This workshop followed a previous GLOHRA online event held in November 2021 and served as a kick-off of the co-minded community. Organized by five GLOHRA members from the European University Viadrina, University Hospital Bonn, Charité University Medicine Berlin, Central Institute for Mental Health Mannheim, and the University of Freiburg, the workshop brought together 32 participants in person, with an additional three joining remotely.

Over two enriching days, researchers from various disciplines and backgrounds had the opportunity to build personal connections and exchange insights. The diversity among participants was notable, with attendees representing fields such as clinical psychology, public and global health, and data science. In addition, the participants grew up in 18 different countries on five continents, contributing to a rich mix of perspectives and experiences.



The workshop's structure encouraged active participation and knowledge sharing through a range of formats. The workshop participants had the chance to share their research via two formats, which they applied for in advance: research presentations and elevator pitches. There were six research presentations providing comprehensive overviews of ongoing research projects and eight elevator pitches showcasing quick presentations and discussions of various ideas. Both formats generated engaging discussions among the participants, which continued during breaks and other informal sessions.

The cornerstone of the workshop was two collaborative sessions designed to facilitate a deeper exploration of key topics in global digital mental health. In these sessions, participants engaged in nuanced dialogues on digital innovations in mental healthcare and the ethical implications of technology-driven solutions in the global context. The discussions highlighted the complex challenges in global health, mental health, and digital health, as well as their intersection. Expert guidance from Mariana Pinto da Costa (King's College London, UK), Yannik Terhorst (Ludwig Maximilian University Munich), and Lauri Wessel (European University Viadrina Frankfurt/Oder) enriched the sessions, providing valuable insights and leading discussions.

The first day of the workshop focused on exploring the challenges facing global mental health, covering topics like the mental health implications of conflict zones, the unique needs of children and young adults, and the growing impact of climate change on mental well-being. The second day shifted towards the potential afforded by digital tools and technologies within these contexts, including the utilization of wearables, the emerging field of digital therapeutics, and the critical importance of digital literacy in navigating the digital landscape of mental health.

The insights gathered from all sessions underscore the complexities and essential requirements for developing global digital mental health projects. These projects necessitate a diverse team of specialists, encompassing experts not only in mental health but technology, culture, and legal considerations. It is crucial to involve end-users more actively in the creation process to ensure that solutions are user-centered, culturally sensitive, and more likely to gain acceptance and utilization by the target audience. Direct involvement of individuals affected by mental health issues in the design and development phases allows projects to more effectively meet real needs, cultivate a sense of ownership among users, and ultimately improve the effectiveness and adoption of digital mental health interventions.

In a final panel discussion, participants reflected on the complexity of navigating the intersection of digital solutions and global mental health. They emphasized the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and highlighted the gap between research and real-world implementation, advocating for increased funding and more robust incentives to close this gap. Another idea from a participant involved summarizing the challenges and solutions in a checklist that can be used as a guide for research in the field of global digital mental health.

The content of the presentations and discussions were graphically recorded by Pauline Gieseler, allowing participants to visually recapture key points from the workshop. Having this in mind, the workshop concluded with the participants' call for continued collaboration and more frequent meetings. Suggestions for future activities included an annual meeting, a hackathon to develop concrete outcomes, and a publication summarizing the workshop's conclusions.

# Toolbox Ideathon

On the weekend of November 30th and December 1st, 22 participants from various disciplinary backgrounds and areas of expertise gathered at Freie Universität Berlin for an ideathon aimed at advancing global digital mental health research. This event was a follow-up to the workshop held in early April, which provided the foundation for ongoing collaboration within the co-minded community. Based on feedback from the previous participants, the ideathon sought to build on shared expertise and diverse perspectives to create a tangible output: a comprehensive toolbox for implementing global digital mental health research.

Over two productive days, participants worked collaboratively to envision the structure and content of this toolbox. The primary goal was to compile actionable insights, practical guidance, and essential information to support researchers and practitioners in this field. During the event, participants identified essential components for the toolbox and collaboratively drafted an initial version (version 0) for selected elements.

The work on the toolbox is ongoing, and the community can look forward to further developments as we continue to improve and expand it. Stay tuned for updates as we move closer to sharing this resource with the broader global digital mental health community.